

Indiana

DEERTRACKER

2002

Department of Natural Resources Division of Fish and Wildlife • www.wildlife.IN.gov

A predictable prediction

2002 Indiana deer hunting season forecast

Every year, Indiana's deer research biologists look into a crystal ball (actually a computer) and predict what the fall deer season will hold for Hoosier hunters. And almost always, biologists predict a season "similar" to the prior year.

Similar is, in fact, what DNR biologists are trying to achieve in balancing Indiana's deer herd. Major variations in the size, age or sex structure of the deer herd are not good for hunters or farmers, and not good for deer.

The ever-predictable Dr. Jim Mitchell, deer research biologist, expects this autumn's deer harvest to be (you guessed it) "similar" to last year since Indiana's deer herd appears to be

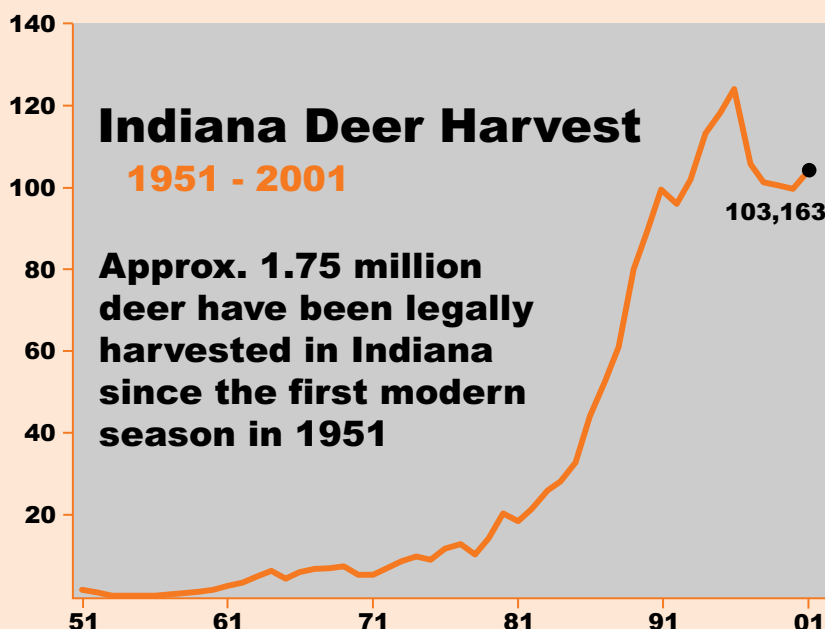
stable. But Mitchell notes that there are a few new factors this year that make accurate prediction difficult:

- Thousands of deer hunters purchased lifetime hunting licenses last year, which might mean these folks will hunt more.
- Deer hunting license fees jumped from \$14.75 to \$24, so those who didn't purchase a lifetime license may hunt less.
- The "one buck" rule change may change the number of bucks taken, though biologists think the rule will have little effect (see page 6).
- Delayed corn planting due to the wet spring may delay corn harvest, which may have an impact on deer behavior during the hunting season.



A stable deer population means Hoosier deer hunters can expect another good year.

The good news, according to Mitchell, is that there will be about as many deer in Indiana's woods and fields as there were last year.



Last year . . .

Hoosier hunters took more than 103,000 deer in Indiana during the 2001 deer hunting season – a 4 percent increase over the previous year's deer harvest of 98,725.

This was the first increase in deer harvest since 1996 and the second highest adult buck harvest on record. Hunters took 48,357 bucks last season. The highest buck harvest was 50,812 in 1994.

The number of deer harvested in individual counties last year ranged from a low of 70 in Tipton County to a high of 2,664 in Steuben County.

2001 Indiana deer harvest by county

County	Antlered	Antlerless	Total*
Adams	195	264	459
Allen	525	635	1,160
Bartholomew	852	397	455
Benton	72	27	99
Blackford	135	182	316
Boone	147	146	293
Brown	727	230	957
Carroll	320	406	725
Cass	514	626	1,140
Clark	783	827	1,610
Clay	499	591	1,090
Clinton	168	163	331
Crawford	812	661	1,474
Daviess	566	644	1,209
Dearborn	1,105	1,405	2,510
Decatur	230	263	493
Dekalb	625	809	1,433
Delaware	261	408	669
Dubois	659	827	1,486
Elkhart	439	578	1,018
Fayette	348	357	705
Floyd	227	240	467
Fountain	547	687	1,235
Franklin	946	1,359	2,305
Fulton	502	899	1,401
Gibson	614	655	1,269
Grant	258	282	540
Greene	875	761	1,636
Hamilton	134	115	249
Hancock	121	67	188
Harrison	924	1,078	2,002
Hendricks	229	192	421
Henry	239	243	481
Howard	146	166	312
Huntington	453	573	1,027
Jackson	918	1,246	2,164
Jasper	525	473	997
Jay	362	430	793
Jefferson	894	1,158	2,052
Jennings	717	771	1,488
Johnson	221	204	425
Knox	442	414	856
Kosciusko	932	867	1,926
Lagrange	715	1,210	1,926
Lake	394	391	786
Laporte	687	1,011	1,699

County	Antlered	Antlerless	Total*
Lawrence	791	867	1,657
Madison	207	309	516
Marion	63	84	148
Marshall	769	809	1,578
Martin	509	528	1,037
Miami	504	525	1,029
Monroe	712	802	1,514
Montgomery	458	487	945
Morgan	577	701	1,278
Newton	415	392	808
Noble	853	1,173	2,026
Ohio	432	638	1,070
Orange	859	1,118	1,978
Owen	712	613	1,325
Parke	992	1,283	2,275
Perry	909	917	1,826
Pike	776	901	1,678
Porter	416	660	1,076
Posey	709	587	1,296
Pulaski	520	495	1,015
Putnam	858	922	1,780
Randolph	229	306	534
Ripley	795	893	1,688
Rush	153	159	311
Scott	368	492	861
Shelby	142	155	296
Spencer	663	652	1,316
St. Joseph	420	424	844
Starke	479	520	999
Steuben	1,168	1,496	2,664
Sullivan	820	708	1,528
Switzerland	1,131	1,275	2,406
Tippecanoe	481	688	1,169
Tipton	49	22	70
Union	216	252	468
Vanderburg	245	412	657
Vermillion	376	357	733
Vigo	593	627	1,224
Wabash	564	445	1,010
Warren	531	584	1,115
Warrick	727	478	1,205
Washington	1,075	1,351	2,426
Wayne	369	397	766
Wells	246	312	558
White	366	431	797
Whitley	502	613	1,115
Total	48,357	54,806	103,163

* Totals may be off +/- 1 due to rounding during partitioning of harvested deer of unknown sex or county.

Home on the range

DNR provides target shooting ranges at many properties

To ensure a successful and safe hunt, hunters should practice target shooting before going afield. The practice time will help improve your aim and distance estimating abilities.

Many fish and wildlife areas, state forests and state reservoirs have archery or firearms ranges. The ranges are open to the public on a first-come, first-served basis, and shooters need to bring their own equipment and paper targets. Some DNR ranges are staffed by range safety officers. Call to check on hours of operation.

Practice ranges are listed in the *2002-2003 Indiana Hunting and Trapping Guide*, available where hunting licenses are sold. The guide also lists many private shooting ranges open to the public.

Shooting range information is also available at:

www.wildlife.IN.gov



Sight in your firearm before any hunting season. Most deer are taken within the 25 to 35 yard range.

Practice Bullets

- Practice shooting with the same equipment you use when hunting.
- Practice at the same distances that you will shoot in the field.
- Wear similar type and quantity of clothing as you would wear while hunting. Practicing in light clothing, but hunting in heavy clothes can affect your shooting.
- Practice in various wind conditions. When hunting, you don't have control over weather. Be prepared ahead of time for windy conditions.
- Practice your range estimating skills to judge distances accurately.
- Practice shooting at different distances to learn your equipment's ability.

.410s for deer

Starting this season, hunters may opt to use a .410 shotgun to hunt deer.

To make the most effective use of a .410 when deer hunting, Capt. Michael Crider, DNR conservation officer, suggests only using shotguns that have proper sights. A .410 (or any shotgun) should have both a bead and rear vee sight for accurate slug placement. A front-bead-only sight is not effective for deer hunting.

For maximum accuracy, have your .410 tapped for a telescopic sight.

In 1900, fewer than 500,000 white-tailed deer remained in the U.S. Today, conservation programs have returned the whitetail population to more than 18 million.

2002-03 deer season dates

Urban Deer Zones	Sept. 15 – Dec. 1, Dec. 7 – Jan. 5 (see page 6)
Early Archery	Oct. 1 – Dec. 1
Firearms	Nov. 16 – Dec. 1
Muzzel loader	Dec. 7 – Dec. 22
Late Archery	Dec. 7 – Jan. 5



How deer season is set

Indiana's deer firearms season is always set to:

- Start on a Saturday
- Start within three days of the middle of the month
- Start about a week after the opening of small game hunting season.

Deer hunting season is set by administrative rule. The rule says, "The firearms season . . . is from the first Saturday after Nov. 11 and continuing for an additional 15 days."

These are the projected firearms season dates for the next few years:

2003	Nov. 15 - Nov. 30	2005	Nov. 12 - Nov. 27
2004	Nov. 13 - Nov. 28	2006	Nov. 18 - Dec. 3

Deer and elk importation suspended

Emergency rule designed to prevent spread of chronic wasting disease

Beginning this past April, deer, elk and other cervid species were prohibited from importation into Indiana. The emergency rule, adopted by the Indiana State Board of Animal Health (BOAH), is an effort to protect Indiana's free-ranging and farm-raised deer from chronic wasting disease (CWD).

In July, Board members voted to extend the suspension though May 1, 2003. A public hearing was held prior to the vote.

The moratorium on imports generated broad-ranging support from the farm-raised deer and elk industries, as well as conservation and wildlife groups and the Indiana Department of Natural Resources.

"While a one-year suspension falls short of a permanent solution, this action affords us time to assess the rapidly changing events occurring nationally regarding CWD," said Indiana State Veterinarian Dr. Bret D. Marsh. "Because so little is known about how this disease is transmitted and live-animal diagnostics are currently nonexistent, we feel this is our best option for protecting Indiana's cervid industry and natural resources until science can provide us more answers."

What is CWD?

Chronic wasting disease, also known as CWD, is an always-fatal, brain-wasting condition that affects animals in the cervid family, including elk, white-tailed deer and mule deer. Little is known about the slow-progressing disease that is part of the category of illnesses known as transmissible spongiform encephalopathies. This category includes diseases such as Cruetzfeld-Jakob disease in humans and bovine spongiform encephalopathy (or "mad cow" disease) in cattle.

CWD has no known human health effects. The risks to humans is infinitely less than all other risks associated with deer hunting combined.

Why is CWD hard to detect?

Certainly, the most difficult thing about CWD is determining if an animal has it. There are no early warning signs, no cure, no vaccine, and symptoms do not develop for 16 to 36 months after an animal is infected. There are no blood or skin tests known to indicate CWD infection. Only late-stage symptoms and death reveal that an animal has CWD.

Do we have CWD in Indiana?

CWD has never been diagnosed in Indiana. However, nine states and two Canadian provinces have reported positive cases in captive and/or free-ranging animals. Concern about the spread of the disease in the United States has heightened recently due to the discovery of several infected deer in Wisconsin this spring.

Indiana BOAH and DNR staff will launch a CWD surveillance program in Indiana this year to verify the health status of white-tailed deer.

Biologists, veterinarians and state officials meet on a weekly basis to assess this rapidly changing situation. Further regulatory steps will also be considered and taken, if necessary, prior to the end of the one-year suspension of the cervid import ban.

Precautions for Hunters

Although no link has been found between CWD and any diseases of humans, deer hunters should follow some common-sense precautions. If you see an emaciated or sick-looking deer, do not shoot it. Rather, note the location and notify a DNR official. In the rare event that an emaciated or otherwise unhealthy deer is harvested, contact the DNR or BOAH (toll-free 877-747-3038).

Hunters should take precautions by wearing rubber gloves while field dressing, and avoiding handling or eating deer brain, spinal cord (backbone), spleen or lymph nodes. To further reduce any risk, do not cut into the skull or backbone when processing the meat.

Although no link has been found between CWD and any diseases of humans, deer hunters should follow some common-sense precautions.

What is DNR doing about CWD?

Over the last two years, DNR has worked closely with BOAH to monitor the CWD situation in other states, and to prepare a plan to prevent CWD from affecting Indiana cervidae, both wild and captive. The best defense we have against the disease is to attempt to prevent diseased animals or materials from coming into Indiana. Additionally, DNR and BOAH scientists are developing programs to identify and respond to the existence of the disease should it be detected in Indiana.

EHD is also a possibility

Sick or dead deer found in southern Indiana during August and September probably have epizootic hemorrhagic disease (EHD), which is spread by biting flies. The last EHD outbreak occurred in southern Indiana in 1996. Humans do not catch the disease from the flies or when eating or handling infected deer. Deer with EHD may die near water or have swollen heads, necks, tongues or eyelids and sores on the roof of the mouth.

Bovine Tuberculosis in white-tailed deer

Disease that struck Michigan herd doesn't appear to be affecting Indiana

Bovine tuberculosis is a serious bacterial disease that affects primarily the lungs and sometimes the digestive tract of livestock, deer and other wildlife.

The recent finding of bovine tuberculosis in wild white-tailed deer, cattle and several other wildlife species in Michigan poses a threat not only to animal health, but also to the economic success of the agriculture and wildlife industries. It also puts this disease on Indiana's doorstep.

Indiana has been recognized as bovine TB-free in domestic animals since 1983.

Hoosiers are advised that the possibility of humans contracting bovine TB from animals is extremely remote. However, if you come into contact with TB-infected animals, you may want to take extra precautions and contact a physician concerning the need to have regular TB skin tests.

Years ago, unpasteurized milk served as a major source of human infections. For many years, Indiana has required milk to be pasteurized to ensure the safety of Indiana's milk supply. Farm families and others are reminded not to drink unpasteurized milk.

Bovine TB can be effectively treated in humans, so it is crucial to contact a physician if you think you have been exposed or have symptoms of tuberculosis including persistent cough, night sweats and unexplained weight loss.

Deer hunter information

All meats – including hunter harvested deer – should be thoroughly cooked to an internal temperature of 165 degrees Fahrenheit for 15 seconds to kill bacteria. In the unlikely event that the lungs, rib cage or internal organs from wild deer look abnormal

(multiple white or red lumps), do not proceed with further field dressing or processing until the carcass is examined by a State Board of Animal Health veterinarian (toll-free 877-747-3038).

If you take a deer on a weekend or holiday, either refrigerate or ice down the deer carcass until the next business day. Keep the animal, including the head, intact until it can be examined.

The deer meat should not be eaten.

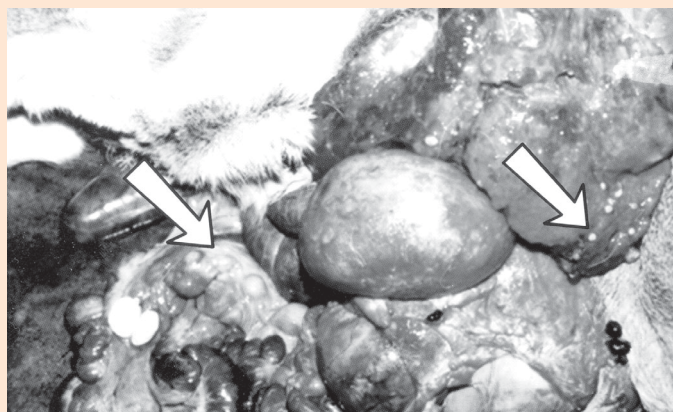
If you submit your deer for further testing, the DNR will replace your permanent/temporary deer tag to allow revalidation of your existing license.

By reporting any suspicious lesion, you are helping the DNR protect the health status of Indiana's white-tailed deer resource.

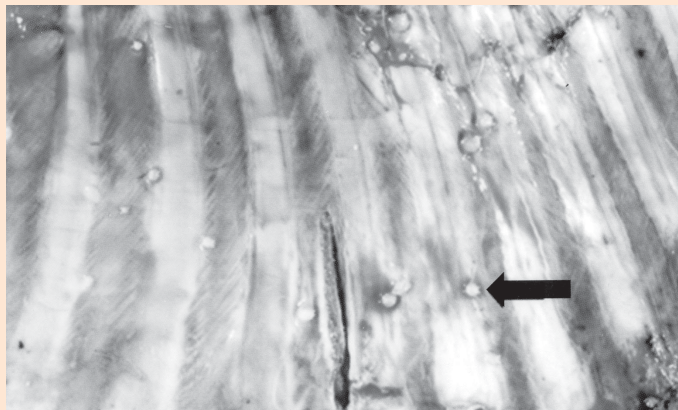
To access the latest information about bovine tuberculosis go to: www.state.in.us/boah and click on the link *Animal Health Cervids*.



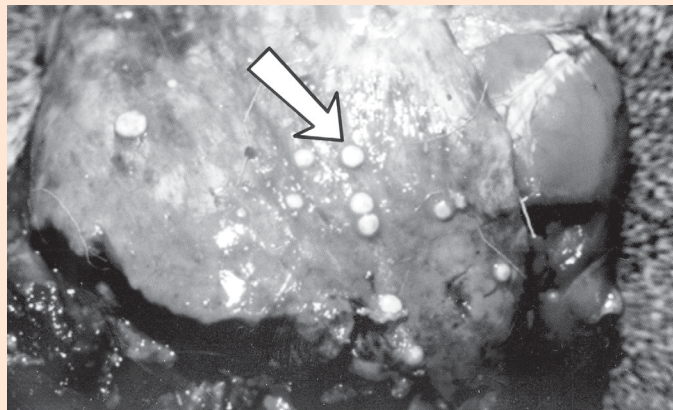
Normal whitetail lungs and rib cage.



TB tubercles on lungs and mesentery of small intestines.



TB tubercles (pea size) on inside lining of rib cage.



TB tubercles (pea size) on lungs.

“One buck” begins this fall

A change in the Indiana buck bag limit is being tested for five years beginning this fall.

The new rule limits hunters to one antlered deer during the early archery, firearms, muzzleloader and late archery seasons (additional bucks may be taken in urban deer zones, military/refuge hunts and state park deer reductions).

Deer hunters proposed the one buck rule change, but agreement among deer hunters was split.

Members of the DNR’s Citizen Advisory Council suggested that the

rule be changed for a trial period. The one buck rule expires in five years.

Biologists will monitor the effect on Indiana’s deer herd, as well as hunter satisfaction. If hunter satisfaction is high and biologists see a shift in the age structure toward older deer, DNR officials may formally propose making the one buck rule permanent.

Give the new deer bag limit a try over the next few years, and then register your opinion about whether the one buck rule should stay or go.

Urban Deer Zones

**Season opens
Sept. 15**

Urban deer zones provide landowners and communities the tools needed to control deer populations in urban areas. These areas can often be hunted safely using archery equipment.

The expanded archery season provides hunters with incentive to help reduce deer numbers in these urban areas. Hunting is the most effective and efficient means of controlling deer populations.

Beginning this fall, the hunting season for urban deer zones starts Sept. 15 – more than two weeks before the start of statewide archery season. In addition to the regular season bag limits, the bag limit in these zones has also been expanded to allow hunters to take up to four does or three does and one buck.

Urban deer zones have been established around Indianapolis, Fort Wayne, Evansville, Lafayette, Gary, Crown Point, Chesterton, Michigan City and Madison. See the 2002-03 *Indiana Hunting and Trapping Guide* for a definition of zones and further details on regulations. Urban deer zone rules do not override any local ordinances. As always, hunters must obtain permission from landowners to hunt or retrieve game.



Check your deer



Biologists and veterinarians will be inspecting deer at many check stations this fall.

Why should you check your deer in at a check station?

- Because it’s mandatory under the law.
- Because the information gathered at check stations is critical for future deer management decisions.
- Check stations are an important collection point for information about deer health.

Hunters are required to log information on county, date and method of deer harvest.

This fall, biologists and veterinarians will collect tissue samples at dozens of deer check stations around Indiana. The samples will be tested for CWD and TB (see pages 4 - 5).

2001 deer harvest by season

Season	Antlered	Antlerless	Total
Early Archery	12,016	11,116	23,132
Firearms	33,360	34,298	67,958
Muzzleloader	2,422	8,667	11,089
Late Archery	259	725	984

2002 Indiana State Park deer reductions

Dates set for 2002 controlled white-tailed deer herd reduction

Applications are now available for a controlled deer herd reduction at 14 Indiana state parks and one nature preserve.

Reductions will take place on **Nov. 18 - 19** and **Dec. 2 - 3, 2002**. Hunters will be selected using a random drawing.

Deer herd reductions are required periodically at state parks to help maintain a deer herd that is compatible with the ecosystem of each state park.

By the 1990s, numerous plant species and entire ecosystems in most Indiana state parks were damaged significantly due to an overpopulation of white-tailed deer. Wildflowers, shrubs and tree species that had been absent for years now are returning as a result of past deer herd reduction

efforts. These plants now provide food and shelter for other wildlife.

For more information about the state park deer herd reduction program and to download an application go to: www.IN.gov/dnr

Applications and instructions are also available at state parks and reservoir property offices.

If you would like a state park deer herd reduction application mailed to you, send a postcard requesting a *state park deer reduction application*, with your name and complete mailing address to:

Publications
DNR Division of Fish & Wildlife
402 W. Washington St., W273
Indianapolis, IN 46204

Firearms Locations:

Chain O'Lakes State Park
Harmonie State Park
Lincoln State Park
McCormick's Creek State Park
Ouabache State Park
Potato Creek State Park
Shades State Park
Shakamak State Park
Spring Mill State Park
Tippecanoe River State Park
Turkey Run State Park
Versailles State Park
Whitewater Memorial State Park
Twin Swamps Nature Preserve

Archery Location:

Clifty Falls State Park

Hunter education: not just for kids



DNR's hunter education program takes approximately 10 hours to complete. Often, the course is conducted over two consecutive Saturdays or on weekday evenings. Parents are strongly encouraged to attend the course with their children.

In order to purchase a hunting license, anyone born after 1986 must successfully complete a DNR-sanctioned hunter education class.

Hunters certified in another state or Canada can also present a card or certificate and purchase an Indiana hunting license.

The DNR hunter education program teaches hunter responsibility and ethics, wildlife conservation and management, firearms safety, wildlife identification, game care, survival and first aid. The program is not just for kids and not just for hunters. The program is for all Hoosiers who enjoy the outdoors and have an interest in conservation. The course is also an excellent refresher for veteran hunters.

The DNR offers hunter education courses in counties throughout the state. The course takes approximately 10 hours to complete. For information on classes in your area go to: www.IN.gov/dnr/lawenfor/hunt-edu.htm
Or contact your local conservation officer or district wildlife biologist.

- **Keep all firearms unloaded until ready to use, and treat every firearm as if it were loaded.**
- **Keep your finger off the trigger until ready to shoot.**
- **Never point a firearm at anything you do not intend to shoot.**
- **Identify your target before you shoot. Never shoot at noise or movement.**